



## Northampton Fire Department

# Memorandum

**To:** Mayor David Narkewicz  
**From:** B. Duggan  
**Date:** October 12, 2014  
**Re:** Fire/Rescue Organizational Designation

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Over the previous fifteen years, the organization has developed a wide variety of life safety services. When I arrived in Northampton, the Department was internally focused on fire suppression and the doors were closed to the community. The change in our designation under the New City Charter reaffirms support for the services and community focus that we have developed.

Currently we offer approximately 68 services to the community. The majority of these services and our responses are of a rescue/life safety nature, ranging from car seat installation to advanced cardiac intervention. As our transport emergency medical services program has matured and has become embedded within our organization, the fire/rescue role was solidified as we developed the Fiscal 2015 Budget.

Typically an organization becomes a fire/rescue entity when the mission of the organization has shifted away from the limited focus of fire suppression. Based on the success of fire prevention and code development, the number of structure fires has decreased across the United States. Most proactive fire service agencies have shifted to more of an all hazards orientation that places a primary focus on life safety services. These organizations have become designated as fire/rescue agencies based on the change in role supported by their community. Presently in Massachusetts 14 agencies carry a rescue, life safety designation.

### The Importance of a Name and Designation

The name designation adopted by the community often defines the expectation of an organization. This name defines the organization for both our staff and the

community. I believe that we have successfully shifted toward a life safety focus and this change should be recognized within the city Charter.

#### **Transitional cost**

There will be no transitional cost as the importance of this change is a formal recognition and support of the role the organization plays within the community not the sign hanging on the side of our stations. Over time as we order new patches and vehicles we will utilize the fire/rescue designation. However, to rebrand the entire organization would simply be a waste of municipal funds. There is no need to immediately order new patches, uniforms, badges, and facility signage.